

GLADIOLA

gladiola
picked for
the long

glass vase
on the kitchen
table

for guests
arriving from
a town

far
south of
here

the man nearly
blind and
the woman

recently
having had a
tumor

removed
from her
lung

so the
gladiola
to make

the table
pleasant
on a

late summer
night
blooming

in all its
orange
redness

fiercely
clinging
to life

AGAIN HE IS AN OLD MAN

thinking of
my childhood i
cannot

picture
my father
as a young man

as though he
were always
old

i can of course
look at
pictures

of him from
that time
but those

images fade
quickly and
again he

is an old man
in my mind
old on the

day of my birth
as old as he
is now

out in his garden
putting new fence
posts up

dragging away
to the
edge

of the woods
the
ravaged ones

—Ronald Baatz

Mt. Tremper, NY